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ABSTRACT

A review of research demonstrates that both oral and written language continue to develop through adulthood. Studies show that such skills as the abilities to interpret metacognitive verbs, to make word associations, and to understand syntax improve with age. Adolescents and adults use language that solidifies them with their peer group. Adolescents use emotive, connotative, and socially coded language. Their socially coded language of swearing shows how conscious they are of how they are perceived linguistically. Furthermore, they are very much aware of linguistic structures appropriate to gender. In writing, semantic and syntactic complexity, complex audience awareness, and skill in narration are indicators of maturity. Writing improves when freed from the level of transmitting information, and is stimulated by interaction and conversation. Student-centered, concept-based transactional learning fosters learning in the classroom. Adolescent language development can be achieved by: (1) student initiative; (2) incorporation of prior knowledge; (3) inclusion of the learner's cultural context; and (4) interaction between school and society. Despite favorable research, contemporary U.S. high schools rarely employ language oriented, collaborative problem solving. Teachers need to learn how to implement such strategies, and they must have the support of administrators, the community, and the government in incorporating language-based instructional methods into the curriculum. (Fifty-four references are attached.) (SG)

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LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT IN ADOLESCENCE AND BEYOND

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Language encompasses the domains of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Language development research has traditionally focused on early childhood, leaving one to question if there is any further language development during the adolescent or later years. Research reviewed in this article demonstrates that both oral and written language continue to develop through adulthood. Since language is continually developing, schools have a responsibility to establish an educational environment most conducive to language and learning. Research detailing instructional methods and school reorganization, both of which are needed to promote literacy, are also reviewed.

Characteristics of Adolescents' Language

There is increasing recognition that the use of language plays an essential role in enhancing the learning process. Any approach that seeks to enhance language integration in the educational setting during adolescents must include a developmental perspective and begin with a detailed analysis of the normative structure and function of adolescent oral and written language.

Oral Language Development

Literacy is the understanding of spoken and written language. The learning of both requires assistance, since speaking and writing need modeling (Kutz & Roskelly, 1991). Speaking takes place

in the present and involves others, therefore, it has a social quality. A language also shares a common sound symbol system which involves the linguistic or grammatical aspects of speaking. Thus one's language encompasses linguistic elements and social aspects. (Kutz & Roskelly, 1991). Linguistically one sees development in the lexical, syntactic, and figurative aspects of language. Socially one becomes aware of identity, gender, peer groups, and the use of narration.

Lexical development pertains to vocabulary (semantic meaning). It has been said that graduating high school students know approximately 80,000 words, therefore, it would appear that most vocabulary is derived through the use of context and not direct teaching (Smith, 1990; Kutz & Roskelly, 1991). A study by Olson and Astington (1987) of 6th, 8th, 10th, 12th grade, and college students' ability to interpret metacognitive verbs referring to the acts of thinking (remember, infer) and metalinguistic verbs, referring to the acts of speaking (assert, imply) indicated that understanding improved with age. Likewise a study conducted by Seoville and Gordon (1980) on factive verbs (know, notice) and nonfactive verbs (think, believe) also showed that college students' understanding was greater than that of the 14 year old etc. (cited in Nippold, 1988).

Likewise, word associations develop with age (Cazden, 1988; Nippold, 1988). In addition to acquisition of learning word meanings, growth develops in the semantic reorganization of words. Children will learn the concrete meaning of a word before the abstract, or the physical meaning before the psychological. A five

year old presented with the word "cat" and asked to say the first word that comes to mind might say "run" whereas a nine year old might say "dog" (Israel, 1984).

The use of connectives, (conjunctions or relative pronouns) are words that join sentences, clauses, or other words in spoken and written language, and also increase with age for both production and understanding (Mc Clure & Steffensen, 1985; Geva & Ryan, 1985). Watson (1985) cites that as children age they not only define more words, but they define words in a different way. Definitions require an individual to reflect on the meaning and use of words, and to state what is known implicitly. Words can be defined by means of synonyms, description, category, and illustration. Category is the most difficult and the use of this form of definition increases with age according to his study (Watson, 1985).

Syntax, the structure of language, is more difficult to assess at the adolescents' level of oral language development because its acquisition is of low frequency and is also affected by its contextual use (Scott, 1988; Halliday, 1989). Sentence and clause length increase with age, but often in such low frequency that the researcher not the educator is the only one aware of the change. The understanding of passive voice also increases with age. Sudhalter & Braine (1985) conducted a study of first, third, and sixth graders using passive voice. The results indicated that sixth graders understanding of passive voice was much greater than first and third graders.

Adolescents use narrative when speaking, one of the simplest

grammatical patterns, and syntactic complexity is rare in their narrative speech (Kutz & Roskelly, 1991; Cazden, 1988). When adolescents were given the assignment to transcribe the tape recording they made of telling a story to a peer, they learned a great deal about the difference between spoken and written language. They learned that their speaking was more simplistic than the written account; they did not always complete their sentences; and their grammar was often incorrect. They also realized that speaking involves a lot of gesturing, and is more informal than writing (Kutz & Roskelly, 1991).

Figurative language which is abstract or hypothetical is first understood at the literal level in the preschool years and gradually advances to the abstract or hypothetical level by adulthood (Ortony, 1985; Vosniadou, 1987). Figurative language is used in conversation and writing to capture attention, entertain, and stimulate one's imagination. Examples of figurative language include metaphor, simile, idioms, and proverbs.

Several studies demonstrate that metaphor and simile increase in their relational focus as one ages (Gentner, 1988; Vosniadou, 1987; Kogan & Chadrow, 1986). Slang often occurs in the form of metaphors. Ortony (1985) conducted a study of black youngsters in grades four, five and six on their use of a language game called "sounding" which uses a great deal of metaphor and figurative language. "Man, you so poor your roaches and rats eat lunch out." "Well, you so poor the rats and roaches take you out to lunch." (p.26) Ortony's study indicated that students who engaged

in "soundings" performed better on their Reynolds and Ortony metaphor-simile comprehension task than those students who did not. Mark (1988) used the metaphoric lyrics in her work with adolescence and found that by listening to music, adolescents were able to discuss meaningful issues within a comfortable framework. The high interest vocabulary and the figurative language is not only understood, but a motivating factor to spark discussion.

Idioms and proverbs are areas of figurative language whose figurative understanding is still incomplete during the adolescent years (Nippold, 1988; Prinz, 1983). Prinz(1983) conducted an idiomatic comprehension task with children ages nine, twelve, and fifteen and adults. On the multiple choice aspect of the task results were 50, 80, 90, 100 percent respectively, however, when the subjects had to explain the idiom results diminished to 20, 35, 50, 95 percent respectively. Gibbs (1987) conducted a study on idiom comprehension with students from kindergarten to grade four using idioms in isolation and in context. There was no difference among the age groups when the idioms were presented in isolation. However, when using context the kindergarten and first grade students were able to understand concrete idioms (turn back the clock) but unable to understand abstract idioms (lay down the law). On the other hand the third and fourth graders could do both. Nippold (1988) in a similar study using proverbs in context, conducted on fourth, sixth, eighth, and tenth graders demonstrated that understanding increased progressively through the grades- 67, 77, 83, 85 percent respectively.

The lexical and syntactic structure of language are only one aspect of how a person speaks. Equally important is how the language is used. In Asian countries there are often different dialects used depending on the status of the person to whom one is speaking. In America the formality of what we say is determined by whom we are with. Therefore, meaning is not derived from just linguistic patterns but also from the interdependence of language and the context in which it is used (Obler, 1989; Danesi, 1989). Social language is acquired from one's culture to insure successful and appropriate interaction in everyday society. Social language is an interactive process by which the speaker states his thoughts and the listener receives the meanings of the speaker's words. The most common form of verbal communication is conversation, the principal means through which a person interacts with and is influenced by others. Thus the perceptions of one's social world are influenced by those with whom they interact, and the internalization of those sociolinguistic experiences determine one's social meaning.

Since social meaning is so important, adolescents and adults tend to use language that solidifies them with their register or peer group (Obler, 1989). This is especially important to the adolescent who is very focused on his identity (Cooper & Anderson-Inman, 1988; Danesi, 1989). The adolescent uses specific styles of language to insure his separation from both the social group of children and adults. Obler (1989) calls this phenomenon bonding language. Danesi (1989) studied 36 adolescents (ages 13 to 18) via

the use of tape recordings and interviews. Three distinct styles of language were employed by adolescents: emotive language programming, connotative language programming, and socially coded language programming. Emotive language programming emphasizes the strong feelings expressed by adolescents, and is characterized through increased rates of speech, overwrought intonation, simplified clause structure, and expressive voice modulation enhanced by gestures and facial expressions. This style is used both with peers and adults. In connotative language programming adolescent's coin words or phrases or extend meanings of existing ones (loser, gross, air head, slime bucket). This style of speech is used primarily with peers. Socially Coded Language Programming is characterized by abundant use of swear words. The swears do not hold the same vulgar connotations of adult usage, but become socially coded speech features of the adolescent's language, suggesting that adolescents are not only conscious of how they are perceived in their dress but also how they are perceived linguistically.

Another aspect of adolescent language is gender related. Adolescents are very much aware of the linguistic structures appropriate to their gender. Since identity is so important for this age group, it is very common to see them acting within the norms of the sex-specific peer group. For example adolescent males often use non standard forms of speech as "she do", and males are much more prone to interrupt females than the reverse. In like manner girl's conversations are much more intimate and their speech

style generates equality through the use of the word form "we" (Obler, 1989; Cooper & Anderson-Inman, 1988).

Peer groups are also bound by a common language (Cooper & Anderson-Inman, 1988; Danesi, 1989). Obler (1989) extends Danesi's research to peer groups of all ages. She states that adults need to acquire styles of speech in their work and social relationships. People of similar occupations often seek each other out because the language (jargon) used in their field of work establishes a peer group. Likewise one uses different language in different social settings i.e. wine tasting, football game. Demonstrating this control over linguistic features and competence in language enhances the likelihood of being accepted by a certain peer group. Cooper & Anderson-Inman (1988) cites a study by Hewitt (1987) in which white adolescents used Creole or London Jamaican in an attempt to establish in-group relations between speakers of different ethnic backgrounds. White adolescents using Creole were accepted by the black kids who used it as a source of their identity.

Narration is a form of speaking and writing (Mayher, 1990; Bruner, 1990). In speech it is most often used between people of similar backgrounds and ages. Cultures reveal their knowledge of the world through stories, and narrative is a source of understanding these stories. Narrative contains a story grammar consisting of setting, problem, characters' internal responses, plan, solution, and ending. This is developed through listening and reading stories as well as participating in everyday

interaction. Cazden (1988) discusses the use of narrative during sharing time in school. He states that the children's narrative begins with reference to time, introduction of the main character, and is followed by the action. The narratives are also divided into two types: topic centered (focus on a single object or event), and episodic (long narratives with several shifts in scene). His research indicated that the white students used topic centered narrative far more frequently than the black students who focused on episodic narrative which is more prevalent in their culture. When reading these two types of narratives to adults, the white adults found the episodic stories more difficult to follow whereas the black adults appreciated both.

Written Language Development

As seen in the development of adolescent oral language, written language also develops linguistically and socially (Camitta, 1990; Kutz & Roskelly, 1991). The linguistic aspects of writing encompass meaning and structure while the social aspects of audience and function provide the purpose (Daniels, 1990; Camitta, 1990). Written communication may be viewed as more abstract than oral communication since there is a shift from an immediate audience that shares the speaker's experiences to an unfamiliar or remote audience, necessitating abstraction, semantic expansion, and syntactic elaboration (Mayher, 1990).

The lexical and syntactic structures of linguistic writing are the focus in this article. The lexical or semantic structure of

writing progresses from the selection of words, to the processing of meaning in the contexts of sentences and other larger units of thought (Nelson, 1988). Word knowledge and the reading of texts that employ words of increased semantic complexity enhance language comprehension and written language development (Smith, 1990). Halliday (1989) stresses that a lexical item (word) which is used infrequently (low frequency) has more impact than a word with high frequency. For example the sentence "The mechanism of sex determination varies in different organisms" has more density than the following two sentences, "The way the sex is decided differs with different creatures." " Different creatures have their sex decided in different ways." (p.65) Have and way are high frequency lexical items and repetition of differ/different reduces the lexical effect. Therefore, although these three sentences say the same thing, sentence one employs increased semantic complexity which is achieved through greater use and understanding of language (Halliday, 1989).

Syntactic complexity is also an indicator of advanced or more mature writing since sentence length, types of conjunctions, number of conjunctions, incidence of secondary verbs, and the use of phrases and clauses increase as one gains more facility with language (Scott, 1988). Research shows that the T-unit length (a measure of a main clause with all its subordinate clauses) steadily increases, noun and verb phrases become more complex, and adverbial connectives such as therefore are used more readily as one gets older (Halliday, 1989).

Discourse based syntax varies with the mode of discourse including the genre (written or spoken) and the type (chat, narration, letter writing) (Scott, 1988). While research in this area is limited, if one considers discourse as a continuum with the informal conversation of "chat" on one end and planned impersonal written reports on the other end, one can appreciate the difference in the complexity of syntax one might use. In developing syntactic research it is important to make sure that discourse types are the same for means of comparison across the grade levels. (Halliday, 1989). Therefore, when comparing written compositions, narratives can only be compared to other narratives or persuasion to persuasion.

Since written language is a form of composing (meaning making) driven by an intention to communicate, writing has the dimensions of audience and function (Kutz & Roskelly, 1991; Daniels, 1990). Audience can consist of self, teacher, a known audience or an unknown audience. Function includes the types of writing such as narration, journals, reports, mosaic, patchwork (Kutz & Roskelly, 1991; Applebee, 1981; Camitta, 1990;).

Since the audience is not present in written communication (except when writing for oneself, as in a diary), the writer must be mindful of, and anticipate the needs of the audience (Daniels, 1990). With an atypical audience (teacher as grader) the intent to communicate is impeded, and writing becomes less effective. The two major components of writing are the content and the audience. As with oral language, writing develops when there are meaningful

language experiences (Applebee, 1981; Mayher, 1990). Despite this fact most school writing is devoid of meaning.

Applebee (1981) conducted a study in grades nine and eleven in two high schools (a university laboratory school and a city school in the midwest) to determine the nature and frequency of writing. Writing for this study included all activities where students used written language: a) writing without composing (fill in the blanks), b) informational uses of writing (note taking), c) personal use of writing (journals), and d) imaginative use of writing (stories). Forty-four percent of the observations included writing of some type, with twenty-four percent observed devoted to categories a and b. Only three percent of the 118 written assignments executed were required to be at least one paragraph in length. The audience for the those longer assignments was generally the teacher as grader/examiner. In grading papers 71 percent of teachers reacted to mechanical errors, very few commented on the ideas, posed counter arguments, or responded with their own view. Mayher (1990) comments that most high school and college graduates feel they are good readers, but doubt their abilities as writers. This has occurred because most writing is done on teacher demand, on teacher selected topics, in teacher-determined manner and written almost entirely for the teacher as grader/judge.

Mayher (1990) substantiates the notion of teacher as the primary audience for students when he reviews the "common sense" approach to teaching writing. The most disadvantageous aspect of

teacher as grader/examiner in writing instruction is that feedback in the way of "corrections" come after the paper had been handed in and long forgotten. For the student, the audience (ie feedback) is far removed from the writing process. The audience, to be effective, should actively participate throughout the written assignment.

When writing goes beyond the pencil and paper task of filling in the blanks, most school writing tends to be chronological narratice (Daniels, 1990). Narrative is the most common form of oral and written language (Bruner, 1990; Mayher, 1990; Smith, 1990). Nelson & Friedman 1988 (cited in Nelson, 1988) found that written narration, like oral narration, develops with age. Using Applebee's stages of true narrative (heaps, sequences, primitive narratives, unfocused chains, focused chains, and true narrative) Nelson & Friedman (1988) studied the narrative schema for fourth, seventh, and tenth graders, and college freshmen. The story schema reached its full narrative structure the first year of college. While fourth and seventh graders did not differ significantly in story schema, there was significant difference between their narrative and those of tenth graders. Thus the findings that narrative structure develops by the middle of high school and continues to improve into the college years, are supported by Mayher (1990), Smith (1990), and Bruner (1990) who view reading, writing, speaking and listening as interactive tasks each creating meaning and relevance to each other. As experience accumulates (through schooling and life-experiences) ones language (oral and

written) continues to develop.

Since oral narrative is the manner in which one interprets and understands his culture, it would follow that written narrative would be a common form for expressing one's views. Therefore, it would seem that vernacular writing should be an acceptable mode of written communication. Camitta (1990) stresses the importance of accepting adolescent vernacular writing as appropriate written expression in the schools. Vernacular writing consists of features of modern, oral, popular and ethnic literature which draw on traditional themes and localized forms of expression. Patchwork and Mosaic are two composing techniques used by adolescents (Camitta, 1990). Patchwork is a combination of original text with insertions of lines from various cultural sources (music, slang etc.). Mosaic, a form of writing that takes materials solely from cultural sources, arranges them in an original writing piece. Adolescents often merge two or more types of writing into one, for example a student combining a poem with a letter using poetic diction, rhyme, metaphor, and imagery. Social oral language and oral figurative language support the adolescents need to play with language and use language to feel a part of a social group. Camitta's vernacular writing corroborates this need and shows its implications for the study of literacy as interpreted by Mayher (1990), Smith (1990), and Bruner (1990).

Writing such as poetry, letters, persuasion, analysis frees the students to make real sense of their experiences, to become responsive to their audiences, and become motivated about writing.

When freed from the typical school language, they begin to look at things in a new light. Relevant writing enables acts of thinking. Writing flourishes when it goes beyond the level of transmitting information. Like oral language, writing needs to be stimulated by interaction and conversation (Greene, 1988; Berlin, 1988; Daniels, 1990).

Strategies for Language and Learning Development

The characteristics of adolescent language development explained the linguistic and social aspects of language, and depicted the development of language on a continuum throughout one's life span. This language development is achieved through interaction and conversation with others (Bruner, 1990; Mayher, 1990; Smith, 1990). Thus it seems to follow that schooling should emphasize the use of language in the classroom.

Contemporary American education falls into two major formats, teacher-centered and student-centered (Monson & Pahl, 1990; Mayher, 1990). Teacher-centered classes which involve "transmission" of knowledge to students, presupposes that the teacher has the required knowledge. Therefore, content becomes the focus of the curriculum, as teachers ask questions, give assignments etc. while the students take the more passive role of listening and answering questions (Monson & Pahl, 1990; Mayher, 1990). Student-centered classrooms involves the "transaction" method of learning whereby the students engage in a transaction between the known and the unknown (Monson & Pahl, 1990; Mayher, 1990). The focus, is on

students who actively participates in their own learning through problem solving and interacting with their peers and their teacher in the discovery of new knowledge (Monson & Pahl, 1990; Mayher, 1990).

Transaction fosters language development in the classroom. Freire (1987), Mayher (1990), Bruner (1990) and Smith (1990) believe that learning and language develop best in the context of social interaction where the student actively participates in his learning. Only in this way does learning have meaning, and without meaning there can be no learning.

Transactional learning involves a concept based approach (Monson & Pahl, 1990; Mayher, 1990; Clifford, 1990). Students, through self-direction and interaction with their peers and teacher explore concepts through active problem solving. This process enables students to begin from their own knowledge base (which will be different for each student), and by negotiating understanding with others, add to the meaning of the concept being explored. Since this approach builds on the student's foundation of knowledge, the student is always the focus, and the teacher does not expect all students to learn exactly the same information. The negotiating of information enables the students to gain insights that they previously did not have and concepts discussed take on a greater depth of understanding (Monson & Pahl, 1990; Mayher, 1990; Clifford, 1990; Reisin, 1990).

Transactional learning can be utilized in the teaching of all curricula. In the "whole language approach" to reading the

construction of meaning is the basis from which instruction starts. Books are read and stories are written or dictated, then phonics and syntax are taught. Learning starts with the whole, and is then broken up into its parts. In this way the meaning is not lost to the student (Monson & Pahl, 1990; Weaver, 1988; Kutz & Roskelly, 1991). Clifford (1990) teaches character development by reading a poem first, thus the meaning is presented as a whole. Discussion then involves questions revolving around why the character did what he did, as well as what the students would do in the same situation. Students begin to realize that not everyone has the same opinion, and that one's background knowledge plays a part in their view. Reisin's (1990) students learned, through the reading of their peer's papers, that a play or a story may be interpreted several ways. Again, students develop a broader awareness of what is being studied through interaction with other students. When students are provided an open learning environment, and are encouraged to explore and discover through dialogue, learning and language develop.

Enriching/Expanding Students Language Through the Content Areas

Research indicates that collaborative learning approaches contribute to adolescents' language development (Slavin, 1990; Rottier & Ogan, 1991; Mayher, 1990; Kutz & Roshelly, 1991; Hamburg, 1989). This can be achieved by a) student initiative, b)

incorporation of prior knowledge, c) inclusion of cultural context of the learner, and d) an interaction between school and society (Kutz & Roshelly, 1991; Smith, 1990; Wells, 1990). Students exhibit initiative when they pursue learning on their own utilizing the teacher as a resource; prior knowledge incorporates the interaction between what is already known with what is to be learned; the cultural context of the learner draws on his social experiences outside the classroom; and the interaction between school and society involves field trips and experts from various fields coming into the schools.

In a cooperative/collaborative learning situation, the teacher structures tasks and projects for students to process in small groups. Slavin (1990) states that research supports the effectiveness of collaborative learning as long as group goals and individual accountability are incorporated into the process. Group goals develop interdependence as each member performs one aspect of the project, and rewards are given for group cooperation. Individual accountability can be maintained through grading individual contributions, with group grades being the sum of the individual grades. Thus all students are actively involved, and all share and participate in the outcome.

In a collaborative/cooperative learning situation the teachers group students, provide clear assignments and directions, model the learning behavior expected, and move from group to group monitoring group progress, praising, and assisting where needed. Groupings are most successful when they consist of three-five students of mixed

ability levels and sex. When possible ethnic diversity insures cultural differences. Research indicates that cooperative learning promotes higher achievement, greater use of reasoning, positive social relationships, positive attitudes toward subject matter, and higher self-esteem (Rottier & Ogan, 1991). Slaven (1990) notes that while more research is needed in grades 10-12 and college substantial positive research has been conducted at the elementary and jr. high/middle school levels.

Another collaborative instructional method is peer teaching in which learners help each other and learn by teaching. Instructional dyads can consist of students of the same age, or cross-ages. Research has shown that peer tutoring not only makes learning more efficient and pleasurable for the tutee, but also significantly increases the learning of the tutor (Goodlad & Hirst, 1989; Stuckey & Alston, 1990; Hamburg, 1989).

The Broad Leaf School of English funded a tutoring project in S. Carolina designed to improve the literacy conditions of rural at-risk students. The project involved several cites and ages. Ninety students were involved overall, and in some cases students were both tutees and tutors. The subjects tutored spanned the curriculum. At the end of each tutoring session the tutors spend 10-15 minutes recording session notes in their journals. Weekly, students write to their advisor rehashing the weeks events, and the advisor writes back with appropriate responses and inquiries. Thus the project incorporates speaking, reading and writing not only for the tutee but also for the tutor (Stuckey & Alston, 1990).

The results indicated that this project was very effective. At the end of the first year the students in the project made substantial gains on state mandated standardized tests. In the second year the students tested out of the remedial reading classes. The college students took and passed the state-mandated teachers' exam and went on to scholarship programs in their fields (Stuckey & Alston, 1990).

The success of this program provides support for the theories of Bruner (1990), Smith (1990), and Mayher (1990) which propose that the interrelationship of reading, writing, speaking and listening create favorable learning situations in all subject areas. This project was built around negotiation of the tutor/tutee as together they learn to learn, and learn to teach. Goodlad & Hirst (1989) note that peer teaching: a) appears to be more effective than an equal amount of normal classroom instruction, b) improves verbal skills, c) results in tutors improving their own self-concepts. Trained tutors are more effective than untrained tutors, and tutees do better when the learning environment is structured.

Freire's "liberatory teaching", developed by Paulo Freire to overcome adult illiteracy in Brazil, also incorporates the elements of speaking, listening, reading and writing which has been adapted to the content areas in the U.S. The process begins as the adults analyze reality through the oral analysis of ten pictures representing aspects of their culture i.e. communication, work, traditions etc. The next step involves meaningful words from the

community. These "generative" words are used to spark discussion of the social and political realities of their lives. Discussion of the word leads to reading and writing of the word, and finally to written expression of ideas expressed orally through the various discussions. By the end of 30 hours of instruction these adults have minimal literacy skills since they are able to read, write, problem solve, and think critically (Brown, 1987).

Freire's "liberatory teaching" has been modified and adapted to high school and adult education situations in the U.S., and has been utilized to overcome math anxiety as well as develop literacy skills in content areas (Frankenstein, 1987; Zimmet, 1987). One high school teacher used the word "education" as the "generative" word for her curriculum II English class. The students were able to move from a school-based to a world based concept of education through discussion. They then read about other's experiences with school and continued to discuss and write on the literal, interpretive, and applied levels. Through this method (modification of Freire's teaching) these otherwise passive students became active participants in their English class (Zimmet, 1987). As stated previously, active learning involves meaning and meaning brings about learning.

Cazden (1988) cites numerous studies where utilizing language among peers within the classroom increased the amount of learning as well as the quality of conceptual learning in all subject areas. The ability to talk through ideas with another individual allows for monitoring and reflection which are essential elements in the

learning process. Peer interactions will differ depending on the subject matter as evidenced in Stodolsky's research (cited in Cazden, 1988) where fifth graders utilized more peer interaction in social studies than in math. Mayher (1990) states that learners are responsible for their own learning, but to achieve this the learner needs assistance because learning is both a collaborative social process as well as an individual one. In Dan Kelly's English class the students are taught how to use journals, how to discuss literature in small groups, and how to assist one another in their writing (Mayher, 1990). Interaction and exchange of ideas contribute to the learning process.

The School's Role in Providing an Effective Environment for Language Learning

Cazden (1988) cites the differences in educational purposes for talk when utilizing recitation and discussion. Recitation occurs when students answer teachers' directed questions; discussion occurs when students explore ideas in a manner conducive for students to talk more and teachers less.

The language oriented, collaborative problem-solving spirit of the curriculums detailed above are rarely utilized in contemporary American high schools. Despite the favorable research on the utilization of personal language and personal experiences within the classroom, the majority of the high school day is spent in teacher dominated classrooms. Reports by Hamburg (1989), Heath (1990), and Petrosky (1990) complain that the regular school

syllabi do not address the needs of today's adolescents, and learning has become segmented bits of information.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (Thomas, 1984) conducted a study consisting of 141 observers, following 141 ninth grade students for a complete school day, in 141 different schools, in 48 states. Results of this study also noted that teacher/student interaction was limited to subject matter, students were not asked to express their ideas, and the majority of the class was devoted to teacher talk and teacher presentation. The teacher lectured, gave assignments, and asked questions while the students listened, answered questions, and took tests.

Petrosky (1988) observed the language activities of the students in two school systems (Sunflower County and the Mound Bayou) of the Delta section of Mississippi in 1988. Observation of English, science, and math classes revealed about 90 percent of the instruction was conducted in unison recitation of rote learning. Class discussion or teacher-student dialogue was at a minimum.

The language theory of Mayher, (1990); Chilver, (1984); Lester & Mayher, (1987); and Wells, (1990) state that learning constitutes learning both in school and out of school, therefore, relating learning to personal experience is important. Learners need to be active participants not just recipients of the teacher's knowledge, and the context of what is taught must develop from the needs of the learner as a language user.

Teacher Inservice Education/Integrated Curriculum

What can be done to improve education? How can we encourage more teachers to develop curricula that require active participation? Just as research has shown that literacy is achieved only when teaching occurs from the top down and not the bottom up, research has also shown that educational reform can best be achieved from the administration down and not from the teacher up (Cheney, 1990; Hamburg, 1989; Heath, 1990; Petrosky, 1990; Shor, 1987). Educational reform can be achieved through: 1) dialogues and inservice training between classroom teachers, researchers, and teacher educators, 2) college preparation of education majors, and 3) schools assessing their own needs (Lester & Mayher, 1987; Cawelti, 1989; Shor, 1987; Showers, 1985; and David, 1989).

Collaboration via dialogues and inservice training between classroom teachers, researchers, and teacher educators, insure that basic theory and concepts are understood to facilitate implementation at the curriculum level. Teacher success can be improved through on going inservice programs where teachers are exposed to a new method of teaching, given material to read and synthesize, see them demonstrated in the classroom, practice them, and provide feedback (Showers, 1985; Hamburg, 1989; Heath, 1990). Initially, this "coaching" may be provided by a researcher or teacher educator. However, as teachers within the school become proficient in a technique, they can provide "coaching" to another group of teachers within their school or community. An important by product of "coaching" is teacher interaction, and empowering

teachers within a school to foster new teaching techniques. This approach requires cooperation by the school principal and superintendent. The principal needs to allow time for teachers to meet, thus they need to be freed up from other duties or perhaps an occasional class. The superintendent must provide the extra funds for the inservice training, and substitutes to ease up the teacher's work load (David, 1989).

Effective college preparation of prospective teachers is essential. Teacher education programs must be designed to provide active involvement of its education majors. It is no longer acceptable to just tell these students how to teach but to SHOW them how to teach by setting an example within their education classes. Also, student-teacher assignments need to be with teachers involved in student centered not teacher centered classes. Theory needs to be put into practice, teacher education needs to provide good interactive language based models of pedagogy (Shor, 1987; Cheney, 1990).

School systems and schools within systems need to assess their own needs. What is good for a rural school in Indiana may not be good for a city school in New York City. Teachers, principals, students, parents, and the local community are the key people needed to evaluate what type of school is appropriate for all those involved. Since learning involves the association of new knowledge with prior knowledge, and the curriculum should allow for the inclusion of personal experience, one could not expect all communities to teach the same material (Hamburg, 1989; Cheney,

1990). Also a schools teaching staff has strengths and weaknesses which lend themselves to different styles and approaches. All schools should develop literacy in reading, writing, speaking, and listening through the use of dialogue and active student centered classes. The means to that end depend a great deal on the individual schools. Target areas for change include school organization, curriculum, technology, and staff development. Organizational changes in some high schools have included creating smaller classes, decreasing the number of departments to aid in interdisciplinary teaming and courses, and providing team teachers the same period free for planning. Some schools have also modified the traditional 45 minute periods. Curriculum changes might include different measures of assessment other than testing, such as long term projects in the form of a science experiment, a musical composition, a photography presentation. Interdisciplinary courses will develop a less fragmented approach to learning by designing curriculum around societal concerns such as civic responsibility, ecology, etc. instead of english, social studies, etc. One school proposed restructuring senior year so students could demonstrate their progress through special projects. Technology can be expanded to incorporate interdisciplinary modes of learning through the synthesis of graphics, desktop publishing, and video presentations. Staff development issues include inservice training, as well as extra pay for extra responsibilities, release time for conferences, and an active involvement in managing the structure of the school (Cawelti, 1989; David, 1989; Wells, 1990).

Conclusion

Contemporary America needs to reassess its present system of education. It is time for contemporary American schools to incorporate "language" into the curriculum. Research has shown that learning involves meaning and we achieve meaning through verbal participation. Students should negotiate their own learning through interaction with their peers. Teachers, through staff development, need to learn how to incorporate language based instructional methods into their classrooms. Research has shown that these methods produce meaningful results. As teachers recognize the advances in student learning, their commitment to the approach solidifies and language learning is enhanced. However, teachers cannot do this in isolation. Administrators, school boards, local communities and government also need to be actively involved in language learning in order to truly incorporate "culture" into the school curriculum.

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